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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/706,914	11/14/2003	Tsutomu Okabe	245161US3 CIP	7655
22850 7590 02/26/2007 OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			EXAMINER MOORE, KARLA A	
			ART UNIT 1763	PAPER NUMBER
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS		02/26/2007	ELECTRONIC	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Notice of this Office communication was sent electronically on the above-indicated "Notification Date" and has a shortened statutory period for reply of 3 MONTHS from 02/26/2007.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/706,914

Applicant(s)

OKABE ET AL.

Examiner

Karla Moore

Art Unit

1763

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE ____ MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 November 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 14 November 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1106.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.
3. The term "just closing" is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "just closing" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention. Examiner has interpreted the limitation to mean that the first opening portion is closed. Clarification and/or correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Pub.

2002/0106267 A1 to Fujii et al.

6. Fujii et al. disclose a wafer processing apparatus in Figures 2, 3A, 3B and 5A, including a mini-environment/chamber portion (high cleanliness room) having a chamber therein (121) and configured to transfer a wafer (using robot 116) between a clean box (102) having an opening configured to be closed by a lid (103) and a housing the wafer, and the mini-environment/chamber, said apparatus comprising: a first opening portion (in wall 105, see paragraph 58) formed on a wall of the mini-environment/chamber for communicating with an outside of the mini-environment/chamber, the wall opposing the opening of the

Art Unit: 1763

clean box which allows loading and/or unloading the wafer between the clean box and the mini-environment portion/chamber, wherein when the transfer of the wafer is performed (or not performed), the clean box is fixed with a first clearance (the first clearance is a vertical wall-like clearance or gap formed between the container and the mini-environment) formed around the entire perimeter of the first opening portion, the first clearance defined by a predetermined constant distance between a coplanar surface extending outside from the opening of the clean box and an outside surface of the wall on which the first opening portion is formed. (See Figures 3A and 3B). Although not illustrated in Figures 3A and 3B, the clean box can have a coplanar surface extending outside from the opening. See Figure 5A and paragraphs 82-84. With this embodiment, a predetermined constant distance between such surface and an outside surface of the wall on which the first opening is formed would also define the first clearance.

7. With respect to claim 2, the apparatus further comprises a door (104) capable of closing said first opening portion when the wafer is not transferred and opening the first opening portion when the wafer is transferred, wherein when the door is "just" closing said first opening portion, a second clearance (the second clearance is a horizontally formed gap between the door and the walls of the first opening portion of the mini-environment/chamber) is formed between the door and a perimeter of said first opening portion, the second clearance communicating with the first clearance, wherein an inside of the chamber is capable of communicating with an outside of the chamber through the first and second clearances.

8. With respect to claim 3, said second clearance is capable of communicating with said first clearance to form a gas flow path from the mini-environment/chamber to the outside of the mini-environment/chamber. See Figures 2, 3A, 3B and 5A.

9. The limitations of claim 4 are addressed above.

10. With respect to claim 5, the first clearance extends in a direction of a wall on which the first opening portion is formed (i.e. vertically). See Figures 2, 3A, 3B and 5A.

11. With respect to claim 6, the "second" extends in a perpendicular direction to "the wall in which" the first opening portion is formed. See Figures 2, 3A, 3B and 5A.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

12. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

13. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

14. Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujii.

15. Fujii et al. disclose the invention substantially as claimed and as described above.

16. However, Fujii et al. fail to teach the container comprising a tab.

17. Fujii et al. do however teach that the container can be formed as desired as long a consideration is given to the angle of the opening between the cover and the container (paragraphs 82-84). Further, with respect to changes in shape the courts have ruled that selections of shape are a matter of choice which a person of ordinary skill in the art will find obvious absent persuasive evidence that the particular configuration of the claimed shape was significant. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966).

18. Given the above, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the container could have been provided with "a tab" as desired.

Art Unit: 1763

Response to Arguments

19. The previous objections to claims 1-3 are withdrawn.
20. The previous 112 rejection is withdrawn.
21. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-6 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

~~21.~~ Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karla Moore whose telephone number is 571.272.1440. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-6:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Parviz Hassanzadeh can be reached on 571.272.1435. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 1763

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Karla Moore
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1763
19 February 2007